

Disturbance **Greg Staats**

Disturbance is a combination of video and photographic works that examine restorative aesthetics and provides a mnemonic continuum of cultural remembrance and complexity of my own contemporary Mohawk experience. These visual documents are equivalents of my emotions and experiences, ones that I cannot express verbally to others. Shelter protects a physical and emotional vulnerability. Within the context of the landscape of the Six Nations of the Grand River territory, specifically the homes of my childhood and grandparents, these works represent my ability to accept the disturbances of life and the natural landscape as an open door to growth and change, while gathering strength and support from the trees as they witness change. The video works are reflections on the ritual of condolence. Via my research, I discovered the convergence of both traditional Longhouse condolence ceremonies and Christian wakes/home services, which have created an in-between place that permits remembrance from various places of identity. Carrying over certain core beliefs from one system to another then creates an interchangeable space for personal re/creation. This space then is reflected via the Mohawk hymns both written and translated, hymns documented and recorded by my paternal grandfather.

Greg Staats (b. 1963, Ohsweken, Ontario) has lived and worked in Toronto since 1985. He is a photographer and video maker who draws on a traditional Mohawk restorative aesthetic that defines the multiplicity inherent in relationships. Staats has developed these 8 works around the notions of animose (full of spirit), errance(wandering with purpose), the performative aspect of objects, and repetition; more recently he has explored his family archive which includes images, sound recordings, diaries and various other documents. Staats resultant videos are contemplative and require viewers to adapt to the rhythms of the natural world. Works that examine and provide a mnemonic continuum of condolence depicts boreal markers on the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in southern Ontario, the artist's birthplace. Staats has had solo exhibitions at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery; Walter Philips Gallery, Banff; Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, Owen Sound; Mercer Union: A Centre for Contemporary Art, Toronto; and Gallery TPW, Toronto. As well his work had been included in group exhibitions at the Ottawa Art Gallery; Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa; and the Museum of Canadian Contemporary Art, Toronto. Staats has received the Duke and Duchess of York Prize in Photography.

Continued on reverse...

Part of

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York Quay Centre, Visual Arts Exhibitions

235 Queens Quay West, Toronto, Ontario M5J 2G8 CANADA

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Sacred

From January to June 2008 Harbourfront Centre asks the big question - what do you hold sacred?

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List of works

From left to right in vitrines:

autumnemonic six nations 1

toned silver print

disturbance

3:02 min.

colour, 2007

autumnemonic six nations 3

toned silver print

wave

3:23 min.

monotone, 2006

*see translation of Mohawk hymn at right

autumnemonic six nations 4

toned silver print

when I left

3:55 min.

colour, 2006

what remains

4:46 min.

monotone, 2007

artist's familial archive source materials

**Translation of Mohawk hymn*

Tsia ka tho? tsi ni shon kwa: wi,

Just see what a beautiful gift God has given to us

Ne ni on kwe ti: io se;

they are good people

Ne ia ke wir iah si io: se?

they have good hearts

Ska ni kon: ra ti: ken

they use their good minds

Teiontatenoron:kwase?

they all love one another

Kerstos shakowi

it is God that gives them this gift

Tsitiohnawatehtneio:skats

God is the fountain for this gift of love/goodness

Watohetsheri:io

it is a good/wonderful/beautiful way of life

Kaianeren karonhia:ke

it is the path of/to heaven

Ne sanarahont:he?

it goes/draws in front/before you

Ensatetenhsten ehnon:ka

Oh listen to the message over there

Ne tsitkontitie:se

Where fly the spirits

Ne ne ionatonhaha:re?

it is they that have happiness

O:nen ehieia:ko?,

the ones that have arrived there

Onen iakononta:raon

the ones that have gotten to the top of the hill

Tsinonwe? nenni:ioh

Let it be so. O wonderful Lord/God

-anonymous

Translated by Grafton Antone, 2006